



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement in Regard to Elections in Albania

As delivered by Chargé d' Affaires Kyle Scott
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
March 1, 2007

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

We also are pleased that Albania's local government elections held on February 18 were generally peaceful and democratic.

The ODIHR Election Observation Mission, in our view, did a professional and thorough job monitoring these elections throughout Albania's territory.

In addition to the standard U.S. contribution to ODIHR efforts, our Embassy in Albania also contributed additionally 22 monitoring teams to the overall international observation effort. We reported that cooperation between ODIHR and the Embassy was excellent and that many of the people who participated for the first time as election observers learned a lot from the professional approach in the election methodology employed by ODIHR.

The preliminary report details technical and political problems in the election process. We agree with ODIHR's encouragement that all political forces should cooperate to make the necessary electoral reforms to ensure that future elections meet the highest standards.

We believe that the OSCE Presence in Albania can contribute to this process by providing expert advice.

We note in particular that the police appear to have performed exceptionally well, often under conditions of provocation and with little sleep.

We agree with the conclusion that there were procedural and administrative problems in the conduct of the elections, which are an indication of the need for electoral reform.

We understand that the counting process continues, and that there have been complaints filed. These must be adjudicated consistent with Albanian law and procedure.

We urge all political forces to respect this process.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.